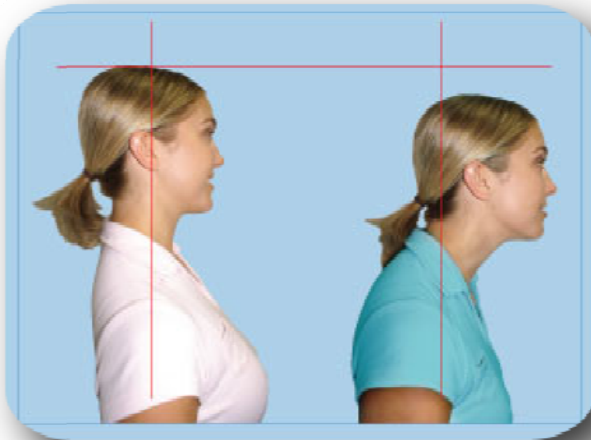


FHP, A Real Pain In The Neck!

A large number of people I see in the clinic have come in for treatment of head or neck pain of some sort and often a common pattern presenting in these patients is a condition called forward head posture (FHP).

What is FHP?

FHP is a very common postural imbalance seen today especially in occupations where people are required to sit for long hours which can lead to slumping. This increases the curve in the upper back and causes the head to slowly drop forward and down, hence the aptly named Forward Head Posture (FHP).



Do I have FHP?

To assess whether you have FHP try the following:

- stand normally in bare feet with your arms by the side
- look straight ahead and have a friend look at you from the side
- an imaginary plumb line dropped from the middle of the ear should pass through the tip of the shoulder. If FHP

is present the plumb line will fall in front of these points.

How does this occur?

An easy way to understand this is to think of the neck as a mobile column with a bowling ball(the head) held on top and guy wires(the muscles) holding everything in place.

In an ideal world, the head would sit above the neck which would lie over the shoulders in a finely balanced system which would place little demand on the muscles (guy wires).

As the head moves forward(due to trauma, tension or postural overload) the guy wire muscles of the neck are put at a mechanical

disadvantage and have to work harder to battle gravity and hold the head up. The end result is overworked muscles causing compression and irritation of spinal joints and their surrounding structures.

In the clinic this presents as a stiff neck, headaches and can lead to jaw problems (to be discussed in another article).

In fact, every inch the head moves forward, the head 'gains' 4.5kg in weight as far as the muscles of the upper back and neck are concerned as they have to work harder to keep your chin from dropping forward on your chest.

What can I do for FHP?

Neck Retractions

This is a simple exercise which can help to reverse the effects of FHP and is great to do when you catch yourself with your head slumped forward.

1. sit up straight in a chair
2. think of lifting the crown of the head to the ceiling whilst keeping the chin parallel to the floor
3. pull your chin and head straight back(don't tip the head)
4. relax the chin and return to a neutral position

Dr Vince Troiano

For more help with FHP or other musculoskeletal conditions please call [Radius Osteopathic](http://www.radiusosteopathic.com) on 93794151.

